

The invention claimed is:

1. A wrapping machine for wrapping items, comprising:
  - a frame defining a wrapping area;
  - a wrapping device adapted to feed film web from a roll of film web;
  - a support arm rotatably mounted to the frame and supporting the wrapping device for movement about the wrapping area;
  - an electrically powered gripping device having a movable gripping member, the gripping device including an electrically powered actuator operably coupled to the movable gripping member for movement thereof to selectively retain and release film web fed from the wrapping device.
2. The wrapping machine of claim 1, wherein:
  - the electrically powered actuator includes a linearly movable member and a resilient member that transmits force from the linear actuator to the gripping member.
3. The wrapping machine of claim 2, wherein:
  - the movable gripping member rotates upon movement of the linearly movable member.
4. The wrapping machine of claim 3, wherein:
  - the gripping member comprises a first gripping member, and including:
  - a second gripping member that rotates upon movement of the linearly movable member.
5. The wrapping machine of claim 4, wherein:
  - the gripping device includes a rack and pinion that rotates the first and second gripping members upon actuation of the electrically powered actuator.
6. The wrapping machine of claim 1, wherein:
  - the gripping device is connected to the frame solely by an electrical line.

7. The wrapping machine of claim 6, wherein:  
the electrical line comprises a flat ribbon cable.
8. The wrapping machine of claim 5, wherein:  
the rack includes an extension;  
the linearly movable member includes first and second spaced apart stops with the extension positioned between the stops, the spring being positioned between the extension and the first stop such that the spring is compressed therebetween when a force is applied to at least one of the gripping members.
9. The wrapping machine of claim 8, wherein:  
the first and second gripping members have gears that mesh with one another such rotation of the first gripping member rotates the second gripping member in an opposite direction.
10. A wrapping machine, comprising:  
a base;  
a wrapping device operably coupled to the base for movement around an object to be wrapped, the wrapping device adapted to feed flexible film to wrap the object;  
a retaining device including a movable retaining member and an electrically powered linear actuator operably coupled to the retaining member such that the retaining member can be selectively shifted between a retaining position and a release position to thereby retain and release film.
11. The wrapping machine of claim 10, including:  
a support arm rotatably connected to the base and supporting the wrapping device for circular movement around an object to be wrapped.

12. The wrapping machine of claim 10, wherein:  
the movable retaining member comprises a first retaining member; and including:  
a second retaining member; and wherein:  
the first retaining member shifts relative to the second retaining member between a clamped position contacting the second retaining member and a released position wherein the first and second retaining members are spaced apart.
13. The wrapping machine of claim 12, wherein:  
the retaining device includes a housing having an upper surface; and  
the first and second retaining members do not project above the upper surface when in the released position.
14. A wrapping machine, comprising:  
a base;  
a table rotatably mounted to the base for powered rotation relative to the base;  
a wrapping device adapted to feed film for wrapping items on the table;  
an electrically powered gripping device on the table, the gripping device having an electrically powered actuator coupled to a gripping member for movement thereof.
15. The wrapping machine of claim 14, wherein:  
the electrically powered actuator includes a linearly movable member and a resilient member that transmits force from the linear actuator to the gripping member.
16. The wrapping machine of claim 15, wherein:  
the movable gripping member rotates upon movement of the linearly movable member.
17. The wrapping machine of claim 16, wherein:  
the gripping member comprises a first gripping member, and including:  
a second gripping member that rotates upon movement of the linearly movable member.

18. The wrapping machine of claim 17, wherein:  
the gripping device includes a rack and pinion that rotates the first and second gripping members upon actuation of the electrically powered actuator.
19. The wrapping machine of claim 18, wherein:  
the rack includes an extension;  
the linearly movable member includes first and second spaced apart stops with the extension positioned between the stops, the spring being positioned between the extension and the first stop such that the spring is compressed therebetween when a force is applied to at least one of the gripping members.
20. The wrapping machine of claim 19, wherein:  
the first and second gripping members have gears that mesh with one another such rotation of the first gripping member rotates the second gripping member in an opposite direction.